

## House Republican Press Release

April 15, 2004  
Press Office: 860-240-8700

### **Rep. Boucher Votes to Buy More Commuter Rail Cars**



Rep. Toni Boucher, R-143<sup>rd</sup>, Wilton, Norwalk, and other area House members unanimously voted for an additional \$25 million on top of \$35 million previously approved to purchase new Metro-North commuter rail cars that the legislature authorized last year.

Rep. Boucher has pushed for improved Metro-North service and equipment for the past eight years. A group of Fairfield County legislators recently met with new Transportation Commissioner Stephen E. Korta and renewed their call for rail improvements, after 30 percent of the Metro-North cars were out of service this past winter due to cold weather and necessary repairs.

“This has been too long in coming,” said Rep. Boucher, a cosponsor of this legislation. “More commuter rail cars are something we have been demanding for a long time. I’m pleased that these cars will finally be ordered. We have needed them for more than a decade. We need even more cars, and this legislation underscores the overall issue of better service for almost 100,000 Connecticut commuters.”

Rep. Boucher added, “Expanding the fleet of rail cars and updating the infrastructure is crucial to the economy of the state. A great many people especially from our area depend on the trains to reach their jobs, in turn generating income and creating revenues that help sustain the state. We need to improve rail service dramatically to attract more drivers off the congested highways.”

Rep. Boucher noted that the New Haven Line’s weekday Connecticut ridership is more than 90,000, including passengers to and from the three branch lines.

Rep. Boucher said the issue of replacing and increasing the number of rail cars dates back before the year 2000. That year, she said, the legislature authorized the use of \$35 million in state surplus funds to purchase eight new commuter rail cars. Her legislation also was adopted requiring the state to reexamine its contract with Metro-North to see that the state and commuters are receiving the best value for our dollars.

“There is much more that needs to be done,” said Rep. Boucher, “both in the Metro-North contract with Connecticut and the railroad infrastructure. After years of lobbying for needed improvements to our rail lines, we are finally starting to be heard.”

In 2001, Rep. Boucher said the state House and Senate adopted legislation that provided an added \$50 million to address transportation. It began a process of rail, bus, carpool and vanpool improvements, and it created a Transportation Strategy Board to devise a long-term statewide plan.

Then in 2003, legislation was adopted to implement a 10-year, \$264-million Connecticut Transportation Strategy Board (CTSB) plan addressing traffic congestion, including Metro-North rail cars for 2,000 more riders, improved stations, expanded parking, reducing truck traffic on I-95 and increasing use of waterways.

“There have been too many delays and too much time spent just on ordering these rail cars. We need to accelerate the pace of rail improvements as quickly as reasonably possible,” added Rep. Boucher.

Delivery of the cars takes 18 to 24 months once they are ordered.